FAQ

9/3/14

Isolation Barrier

1. Why isn't this happening in July 2014 as promised?

A: As the Corps has explained to the stakeholders, there are significant factors that make this a highly complex project: digging into in a landfill that contains mixed materials of unknown stability, coupled with a smoldering event in an adjoining state-managed landfill, and the presence of radiologically impacted material at various depths. As the Corps has explained, it will take time to properly plan and execute. We are ensuring the science and engineering facts drive the requirements and timeline. Through the process, the safety of the communities we serve is our top priority.

2. If part of the delay is the need to define the extent of the RIM, what is the plan for getting that accomplished?

A: As *IB alternatives are being examined by EPA, using the Corps technical advice, the PRPs will submit a work plan for the additional investigation needed. The first step is for the PRPs to prepare and submit more detailed plans for the IB alternatives and bird mitigation, which are due in mid October.*

3. If you don't know where all the RIM is, and you don't know whether the SSE is moving toward the RIM, and you aren't planning to do anything for 18 months, how are we to feel safe?

A: EPA is operating a sophisticated air monitoring system around the WLL site. The system monitors 24/7 for gamma radiation and includes routine sampling and analysis for a variety of constituents. The system is operated by EPA On-Scene Coordinators. To date, the system has not shown any gamma levels above normal background.

Regarding the movement of the SSE, EPA's Office of Research and Development reviews the data collected by Republic Services, and submits a quarterly report containing its evaluation of the status and progression of the SSE. To date, EPA has concluded that the SSE remains nearly 1000 feet from the known RIM, and there is no conclusive evidence that the SSE is moving toward the RIM.

4. What are the next steps to ensure this project keeps moving?

A: *The next step is for the PRPs to submit more detailed plans for the various IB alternatives, including bird mitigation plans. These plans are due in mid October to EPA. The plans will be provided to the SLAA and FAA for review at the same time EPA and the USACE are reviewing them. SLAA and FAA comments will be fully considered before EPA directs the PRPs to move ahead with*

design plans based on Corps input.

5. Could the risk of bird strikes impact decisions about installation of a barrier?

A: *The risk of bird strikes is a real and immediate public safety concern, both for the flying public and for people living and working in the surrounding community. Managing these risks through an effective bird mitigation program will be the subject of SLAA, FAA, and EPA discussions later this fall. The SLAA and FAA will need to approve any bird mitigation plans, only if they are satisfied that the risk of bird strikes will be adequately addressed in order to ensure public safety.*

6. What happens if the SLAA disapproves of the bird mitigation plans?

A: *EPA will require the PRPs to revise the plans in an effort to meet the SLAA and FAA concerns.*

7. Could the SLAA stop construction of the IB?

A: *The negative easement provides certain authorities to the SLAA, which could ultimately alter plans for an IB. At this time, planning continues for construction of an IB with effective mitigation plans to address the threat of bird strikes.*

8. Are there other ways besides construction of an IB to prevent the SSE from coming into contact with the RIM?

A: *There are various engineering controls that can be implemented to control the spread of the SSE. These controls include underground cooling systems that can be installed without creating major disturbances to the surface of the landfill. Currently there is a vast network of monitoring probes that monitor temperature and landfill gases in order to keep a watchful eye on the SSE. Existing data indicate that the SSE remains nearly 1000 feet from any known RIM. Additional probes are being installed in the neck area of the landfill to augment the existing monitoring network.*

Subsurface Smoldering Event

9. What about the SSE? Is it moving closer to the RIM?

A: *Analyses of the smoldering event by the responsible parties and MDNR's experts sometimes provide different perspectives of its movement and location. Because different barrier alignment alternatives will take different durations to design and install, those durations become a consideration in selecting an alignment because of the smoldering event and the uncertainty in its movement.*

Off-Site Areas and BMAC

10. Are there any plans to further investigate offsite areas, including BMAC?

A: *In consideration of all available scientifically valid data, there is no indication that RIM from WL has migrated to any offsite areas. Therefore, EPA does not currently plan to conduct offsite investigations, and instead intends to focus on the work remaining to characterize the RIM onsite and to complete the remedy selection process.*

11. Are there any plans to sample at depth at BMAC, given the community concern about this scenario?

A: *No. EPA conducted an extensive gamma screening and surface soil sampling assessment at BMAC that clearly indicates no health concern for the types of exposures that would be encountered at the park. There is no reason to believe there would be health concerns from soil at depth.*

12. What about the soil/dust that people get exposed to when the bases get changed out? Those holes go down 6-8 inches.

A: *The bases are connected into a stationary metal pipe beneath the ground. There is little or no disturbance of soil at depth that occurs during change-out of the bases. Additionally, any exposures that might possibly be encountered would be of such short duration that the overall risk would be negligible.*

13. What about all the soil at depth that gets brought to the surface when the fields are turned over after every rain event? Aren't the kids exposed to that? The sampling EPA did only reflected one point in time for the top 2 inches.

A: *The BMAC Director provided to EPA an explanation of field treatment following rain events. The fields are not "turned over", whereby soil at depth is brought to the surface. Rather, an additive is applied to the surface and then the fields are raked, which only impacts the surface of the fields. Even if the practice involved turning the fields over and bringing up the top 6 inches, over time the entire 6 inch layer would have become homogenized, and sampling at any depth in that layer would be representative of the whole layer.*